

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ANTANA 01563 171410Z
ACTION AF-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ANTANANARIVO 1563

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MA, CU, KN, TSPA, MASS, PEPR
SUBJECT: MADAGASCAR, CUBA, KOREA AND NASA

REF: A) ANT 01510; B) ANT 1521 & PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: I HAVE INFORMED FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT USG DOES NOT CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE TO PUBLICLY REOPEN ISSUE OF NUMBER CUBAN MILITARY ADVISORS IN AFRICA JUST TO MAKE KNOWN MADAGASCAR'S DISCLAIMER, BUT THAT USG IS NO LONGER CARRYING FIGURE OF 30 SUCH ADVISORS IN MADAGASCAR. I ALSO TOLD FOREIGN MINISTRY THAT, IN ORDER NOT TO JEOPARDIZE POSSIBILITY OF A NASA SETTLEMENT, I WOULD NO LONGER PRESS FOR MEDIA EXPOSURE OF USG POSITION ON KOREA, NOR PROTEST MALAGASY INACTION ON MY PREVIOUS REQUESTS ON THIS SCORE. FOREIGN MINISTRY ASKED ME TO PUT MY REPLY ON CUBAN MATTER IN WRITING, WHICH I AM DOING, AND SAID IT WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR ACCESSION TO MY REQUESTS ON KOREA. END SUMMARY.

2. I SPOKE TO DIRECTOR OF BILATERAL AFFAIRS AT FOREIGN MINISTRY, PAUL RAKOTONDRAMASY, ON AUGUST 17 CONCERNING USG'S PUBLIC ESTIMATE OF 30 CUBAN MILITARY ADVISORS IN MADAGASCAR, INFORMING HIM THAT A) AT EMBASSY REQUEST THIS FIGURE FOR MADAGASCAR WAS CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 ANTANA 01563 171410Z

NO LONGER APPEARING IN USG DUCUMENTS BUT B) THAT IT HAD BEEN DECIDED IN WASHINGTON NOT TO REOPEN SUBJECT TO MAKE PUBLIC DISCLAIMER ON MADAGASCAR ALONE SINCE ORIGINAL USG RELEASE CONCERNED 16 COUNTRIES. DIRECTOR RAKATONDRAMASY ACKNOWLEDGED THIS AND ASKED ME TO PUT IT IN WRITING, WHICH I AM DOING.

3. I THEN TOLD PAUL RAKOTONDRAMASY THAT MALAGASY SECRECY ON ITS MILITARY RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES CONTRIBUTED TO THE EXISTENCE OF RUMOURS OF MILITARY ADVISORS IN THE COUNTRY. FOR INSTANCE IT IS KNOWN THAT MADAGASCAR IS GETTING ARMS FROM SOCIALIST COUNTRIES AND IT IS CONSEQUENTLY EVIDENT THAT SOMEONE MUST BE TRAINING THE MALAGASY MILITARY IN THEIR USE. WHILE IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT SUCH MILITARY MATTERS ARE KEPT SECRET, AND WHILE MADAGASCAR HAS EVERY RIGHT TO OBTAIN EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING WHEREVER IT WANTS, THE LACK OF PUBLIC INFORMATION LEADS TO ALL KINDS OF SPECULATION ON THE SUBJECT. PAUL R. ACKNOWLEDGED THIS FACTOR IN THE SITUATION.

4. I THEN ASKED HIM IF THERE HAD EVER BEEN ANY CUBAN MILITARY ADVISORS IN MADAGASCAR. HE REPLIED THAT THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME TEMPORARILY IN THE COUNTRY IN A CIVILIAN CAPACITY AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN OTHERS HERE FOR A "SECURITY INSPECTION", STRESSING THAT HE WAS GIVING ME THIS INFORMATION CONFIDENTIALLY ON A PERSONAL BASIS. COMMENT: THIS PROBABLY REFERS TO PREVIOUS REPORTS THAT CUBANS WERE PROVIDING TRAINING FOR PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA'S PERSONAL SECURITY GUARD BOTH HERE AND IN CUBA.

5. PAUL R. THEN VOLUNTEERED THE INFORMATION THAT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ANTANA 01563 171410Z

HIS NOTE ON CUBAN MATTER HAD BEEN BROUGHT ABOUT BY MY SUCCESSION OF NOTES ON KOREAN QUESTION, THAT HE WAS STILL PUSHING MY REQUESTS FOR A PRESS CONFERENCE AND/OR OFFICIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE OF USG POSITION ON KOREA, AND THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR ME TO FOLLOW UP AGAIN IN WRITING ON THIS REQUEST.

6. I TOLD MY INTERLOCUTOR THAT I HAD BEEN AUTHORIZED BY WASHINGTON TO TAKE NOTE IN WRITING OF LACK OF POSITIVE RESPONSE TO MY KOREAN REQUESTS AND POINT OUT THAT IT COULD ONLY BE INTERPRETED AS MALAGASY INDIFFERENCE TO BILATERAL DRM/USG RELATIONSHIP, IF NOT OUTRIGHT HOSTILITY, AND THAT IT WOULD NOT FACILITATE NORMALIZATION OF THIS RELATIONSHIP WHICH DRM AUTHORITIES PROFESSED TO DESIRE. I THEN SAID I WAS REFRAINING FROM TAKING THIS STEP ONLY IN ORDER NOT TO JEOPARDIZE CHANCES FOR SUCCESS OF RESUMED DIALOGUE ON A NASA SETTLEMENT.

7. PAUL R. WAS AWARE OF MY DEALINGS WITH PRESIDENCY ON NASA AND HAD A COPY OF SOLOFOSON'S AUGUST 4 LETTER TO ME (REF B). HE SAID THAT HE

UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED MY FOREBEARANCE ON KOREA
IN THIS SITUATION BUT THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER MY
REQUESTS DEAD AND THAT HE WOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE
THEM. I TOLD HIM ANY ACTION HE COULD OBTAIN WOULD
BE APPRECIATED EVEN THOUGH I WOULD NOT BE PURSUING
THE MATTER ANY FURTHER IN WRITING FOR THE TIME BEING.BARRETT

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